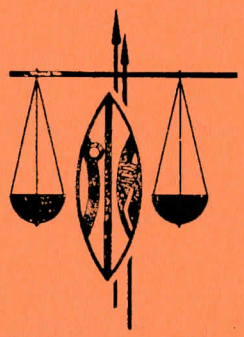

INFORMATION PACKAGE

re:

AFRICAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY PREPARATORY CONFERENCE

"Eliminating Racism: Linking Local and Global Strategies for Change"

March 24 - 25, 2000

Toronto, ON

for the

UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

South Africa

August 31 - September 27, 2001

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DOCUMENT I

Coordinating Committee of NGOs in the Americas
Address

Attn: Mr. Asjborn Eide, Chair
Working Group on Minorities
Sub-Commission on Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
Palais Wilson
1211 Geneva 10

re: Proposed Seminar on African Minorities in the Americas

Dear Professor Bengoa:

We are members of the Coordinating Committee of the NGOs of the Americas. In May of this year, NGOs came together in Geneva at the First PrepCom for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, et al (WCR) and set up a global structure to ensure that the voices of the victims of racism would be heard and represented at the Conference.

We are writing to voice our support for the proposed regional seminar on African Minorities in the Americas. Among our members are representatives of nearly all African communities in the Americas (including the Caribbean). This seminar is both necessary and timely because the conditions of nearly 200,000,000 Africans in the Americas are worsening. Although living in different countries and speaking different languages, they share a common history and present reality in the persistence of human rights violations they suffer. While the forms of these violations may vary according to national particularities, their essence is the same

The proposed seminar would help to identify those violations, their bases, their commonalities and differences and would help suggest resolutions. Such a seminar would also provide a valuable contribution to the World Conference against Racism and its followup.

We as the Committee as a whole, as well as representatives of our particular constituencies, will provide whatever help is necessary in ensuring the success of the proposed seminar.

Yours,

cc: Sr. Jose Bengoa

DOCUMENT II

LETTER REQUESTING THAT US HOLD A NATIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING

July 17, 2000

President William Clinton
c/o Ms. Debra Carr, Chairperson
White House Interagency Task Force on the
World Conference against Racism
The White House, OEOB Rm. 93
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Clinton

We are members of the Coordinating Committee of the NGOs of the Americas. In May of this year, NGOs came together in Geneva at the First PrepCom for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, et al (WCR) and set up a global structure to ensure that the voices of the victims of racism would be heard and represented at the Conference. We are writing to voice our urgent request that the United States hold a National Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference.

In the Americas region, Canada, Honduras and Brazil have already scheduled national meetings. Ecuador and Uruguay are expected to announce theirs national meetings shortly. Given your articulated commitment to address the racial situation in the US, we cannot understand the refusal of the US to hold such a meeting. It would permit the participation of thousands of people in the process of developing a broad US contribution to the WCR. It would also provide an immeasurable boost towards publicizing the WCR in the US and around the world.

We hope that the US, a country that describes itself as a leader in the human rights arena, will concretely demonstrate that leadership by agreeing to hold a national preparatory meeting.

Yours,

DOCUMENT III (Page 1 of 7)

ACLC INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Canadian NGOs

FROM: Margaret Parsons (Representative)

DATE: August 1, 2000

RE: Report from Meeting of the Americas Coordinating Committee

---

DAY I - July 13

As the Canadian representative on the Americas Regional Coordinating Committee, hereinafter Coordinating Committee, I represented Canada at an in-person meeting which was held in Puerto Rico from July 13-16, 2000. The meeting opened with a press conference at the Puerto Rican Bar Association. The purpose of the press conference was to highlight the World Conference but also to focus on racism in Puerto Rico particulary as it relates to Afro Puerto Ricans. Deborah Robinson (U.S.), Palmira Rico (Puerto Rico) and Kim Gottschaek (Indigenous) all spoke at the press conference on behalf of the Coordinating Committee. There was representation from all forms of media at the press conference. The first part of the meeting was a closed discussion with members of the Coordinating Committee and was devoted primarily to the development of the agenda for the meeting, delivering sub-regional reports and discussing how to ensure full participation by observers who were present at the meeting. A copy of the agenda for the meeting as well as a list of all participants and sample letters are attached to this memorandum.

DAY II - July 14

Sub-Regional Report:

Andean (Irene) - Although the majority of the population from this sub-region are Indigenous, the Afro-Peruvian and Afro-Colombian movements have had greater visibility. Irene is hoping to have a sub-regional meeting for Andean NGOs after October 12th at which time the election of the permanent representatives to the Coordinating Committee for the Andean sub-region will take place.

Canada (Margaret) - A report was provided on the overall situation in Canada in terms of the Canadian government's response and actions to date with respect to the World Conference. An update was given on activities that are being planned at both the community and government level. Participants were informed of the ACLC's Prep Com which was held in March 2000 and the creation of a national coalition of African Canadian organizations that will take the lead in organizing and preparing the Black community for the World Conference. Participants were also informed of plans to hold a meeting of Canadian NGOs in early September. Based on reports received to date from the government, it appears that the government will be planning

a national Prep Conference as well as regional conferences in the fall. These conferences will help the government formulate Canada's official response to the five (5) themes for the World Conference that were developed at the Prep Com in Geneva in May of this year.

Brazil (Ivanir) - It was reported that Afro Brazilians are taking the lead in organizing for the World Conference in Brazil. Ivanir reported that while this meeting was taking place in Puerto Rico, one hundred (100) Afro Brazilian organizations were also meeting to develop a common agenda and strategy in preparation for the World Conference. A large national meeting is being planned (no date was given), where it is expected that 300-400 representatives from the Black community will be present to form working groups and to develop a common position on the issue of reparations. There are efforts being made to link with Brazil's Indigenous community.

Southern Cone (Romero) - This representative reported that NGOs in this sub-region have been met with "sympathetic coldness" by their respective governments. One of the major issues in this sub-region is the displacement of 2 million Afro-Colombians from their land. Confiscation of land and displacement is also a similar struggle of the Indigenous peoples of this area. African and Indigenous peoples in this sub-region are also leading the efforts to coordinate around the World Conference. To date, there has been no commitment on the part of governments in the Southern Cone to focus on race and racism.

Indigenous - US (Juana) - Since the Prep Comm in Geneva in May of this year, several meetings have been held in Indian country (Oklahoma, Alaska, New Mexico, California). The American Indigenous community have also met with Phil Fontaine of the Association of First Nations (Canada). The perception of the Indigenous people is that most people of colour do not have a clue about their oppression. Therefore, people of colour are not viewed by most Indigenous peoples as allies but as perpetrators. It was suggested that Indigenous peoples and people of colour in the Americas need to come together to form a united front on common issues as we head into the World Conference. The American, and hopefully Canadian Indigenous groups will be meeting in St. Pauls Minnesota in November to formulate their position on the five (5) themes.

Central America (Celeo) - To date, the representatives in this sub-region have distributed information to all organizations in the sub-region and is currently engaging in a dialogue with their respective governments. Honduras is holding its National Conference August 15-16. The main focus of the Honduran Conference is social exclusion and xenophobia. On August 12-13 there is a meeting in Panama for Africans in this sub-region to fine tune their positions on the five (5) themes. There is also a press conference planned for the week of July 24th in San Salvador. To date, there is strong interest and commitment from NGOs in this sub-region to organize and participate in World Conference activities.

Caribbean (CAFRA/Palmira) - It was reported that Puerto Rican NGOs are working closely with the Puerto Rican Bar Association and the Puerto Rican Civil Rights Association to conduct research and to prepare a report on racial justice in Puerto Rico. To date, information has been distributed on the World Conference to civil society in the Dominican Republic and Cuba. They

have also been able to successfully use the press to assist in the dissemination of information about the World Conference. Work is currently underway in this sub-region to build coalitions and alliances among Caribbean NGOs especially with those in the English speaking Caribbean.

United States (Deborah) - The U.S. representative reported that there is not one specific process in place in the U.S. with respect to the World Conference. On June 17th a meeting was held in Philidelphia with U.S. NGOs on the East Coast to disseminate information from Geneva on the World Conference, to discuss the five (5) themes and to develop a broad based coalition of American NGOs. There is a meeting of West Coast NGOs on July 22nd in Oakland, similar to the meeting held in June in Philadelphia. A Steering Committee made up of eighteen (18) NGOs has been formed to direct the NGO process in the U.S. (6 from NGOs who were in Geneva, 6 from East Coast NGOs, and 6 from West Coast NGOs). The U.S. government is planning five (5) national experts meetings on the five (5) themes to be attended by 25 experts per meeting. U.S. NGOs are upset with the governments plans. Rather than holding a national conference, their government is restricting input on the themes to 125 experts. However, they have requested observer status at these experts meetings. To date, outreach to the African American community has been through posters, brochures and community meetings. The key issue for African American NGOs is reparations and getting a declaration that the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was a crime against humanity. The issues that U.S. NGOs want to focus on are: immigration, environmental racism, Vieques and language justice. It was reported by one of the observers that there is a race/gender research project based at American University on the intersection of race and gender with the main focus being Latin American/Caribbean women.

AMERICAS PREP CONFERENCE & NGO LIAISON OFFICE

1. It appears that Chile has agreed to host the Americas Preparatory Conference. The Conference for the region will occur in Santiago, Chile from December 4-6. The Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, which is based in Costa Rica, will be coordinating this regional conference. The Coordinating Committee raised questions about the lack of information its members has received from the office of the NGO Liaison, Laurie Wiseberg.

2. Irene Leon of the Agencia Latinoamericana de Informacion (ALAI) reported on Friday that a proposal has been developed and submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner (Mary Robinson) for a consultation with American NGOs. She claims that this will be an autonomous process and the consultation will provide space for NGOs to discuss multi-sectoral issues. Irene went on to state that this consultation was developed in response to the possibility that the Americas may not have a Prep Conference in light of Brazil backing out. Therefore, this alternative consultation was discussed (without input from the Coordinating Committee) before Chile agreed to host the Americas Prep Conference. It was also reported that the proposal is moving along and is in fact, on the High Commissioner's desk. The consultation is to take place the first week of February 2001 in Quito, Ecuador. The two (2) groups that were chosen to coordinate the consultation were ALAI and the Human Rights Institute (HRI), the organization where Laurie Wiseberg (the NGO Liaison) is the Executive Director. Information was not forthcoming by Irene on how these organizations were chosen to organize this consultation.

There was an immediate and severe response from the other members of the Coordinating Committee to Irene's disclosure of the proposal from ALAI and HRI. The consensus from the members and observers present was that this process is a direct breach on the part of Laurie Wiseberg to consult with the Regional Coordinating Committees and the Facilitation Team in light of the democratic process NGOs engaged in while in Geneva to ensure transparency and a fair and open process. Members wanted clarification on the relationship of the Regional Coordinating Committees and the Facilitation Team to the NGO Liaison. Concern was also raised with respect to what appears to be a conflict of interest with Laurie Wiseberg as the Executive Director of HRI, to choose HRI as one of the organizations that will receive money to coordinate this consultation. Members were also extremely upset and expressed their disappointment with Irene's participation in this process, without informing the Coordinating Committee, of which ALAI is a member. In fact, it was stated that the Coordinating Committee still felt that Irene was not disclosing all of the details and that a strong mis-trust now exists between ALAI and the Coordinating Committee. A copy of the proposal was requested, and Irene indicated that she did not have the proposal with her and would first have to check with HRI before distributing a copy to the Coordinating Committee.

The Coordinating Committee agreed by way of consensus to the following:

1. That ALAI and HRI be asked to hold off on any further development of the proposal until the Coordinating Committee received formal word on where the Americas Prep Conference will be held. If by a particular date there is no final decision, any proposal for a Regional NGO consultation that will take the place of the Americas Prep Conference will be developed by the Americas Coordinating Committee.

2. A letter is to be drafted requesting an in-person meeting with Laurie Wiseberg, the NGO Liaison, to discuss the following:

    a) The relationship with the Coordinating Committee and the Facilitation Team to the NGO Liaison;
    b) To receive an update on the status of the proposal for an NGO Consultation and to determine exactly where the proposal is in the U.N. system;
    c) To identify the kind of support the Coordinating Committee and the Facilitation Team can expect from the NGO Liaison;
    d) The possibility of the Facilitation Team serving as an Advisory Committee to the NGO Liaison; and,
    e) To receive clarification and information on future NGO meetings.

DAY III - July 15

At the end of Day 2 the Coordinating Committee left the meeting with the impression that there was still room to influence the process with respect to the NGO Consultation. However, on Day 3 our suspicion and mistrust for Irene was confirmed when Irene stated that she called her

"contacts in Geneva" who informed her that the consultation "is a done deal" and the Coordinating Committee could not have any input in the process. At this point "all hell broke loose" and the Coordinating Committee agreed to write a letter to Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner, requesting an in-person meeting with her instead of Laurie Wiseberg.

On Day 3 of the meeting, a very preliminary calendar of events was established and a short-term strategy was developed to gain more publicity for the World Conference in each sub-region and country in the Americas. Deborah Robinson of International Possibilities Unlimited is preparing the calendar of events. This will be distributed to Canadian NGOs once it is received. The following is a short-term strategy of activities that each sub-region is asked to participate in:

1. Organize a meeting with Laurie Wiseberg and Mary Robinson (Margaret)
2. Development of Poster for the Americas Region (Ivanir)
3. Draft a Declaration in support of sub-regional Conferences (Deborah)
4. Calendar of Events (Deborah)
5. Develop a brochure on the World Conference (to be translated in three languages) (Roger)
6. Work actively to get representatives from Mexico on the Coordinating Committee (Palmira, Sara, Juana)
7. Media Strategy (each sub-region)
8. Simultaneous activities around October 12th (each sub-region)
9 Web page for the Coordinating Committee (Irene)
10. Letters to Congress regarding Indian blood quantum (each sub-region)
11. Letters to U.S. in support of a National Conference (Roger to prepare draft)
12. Identify Countries having a National Conference (to date Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, Uruguary)

Also on Day 3, there was a panel presentation from three (3) Puerto Ricans who discussed the Vieques situation. This issue involves the use of the island of Vieques (which has a predominately Black population), by the U.S. military, to hold live bombing target practices. Romero has agreed to prepare a statement from the Coordinating Committee denouncing the U.S. governments actions in Vieques.

ACCAR DISCUSSION/DECISIONS

1. Response to Laurie Wiseberg with respect to the coordination of the NGO Consultation for the Americas and the exclusion of the Coordinating Committee and breach of the process established in Geneva.

2. NGO meeting for Canada (early September)

3. Involvement of Canadians in the Shout of the Excluded

4. Participation of ACCAR at the Sub-Commission

5. Development of a Media Strategy for Canada

6. Participation in the Americas Preparatory Meeting

7. Participation in the Americas Expert Meeting

8. Participation at the next meeting of the Americas Coordination Committee

9. Participation at the Inter-sessional meeting

10. Agreement on Letters

    1. Indian Blood quantums
    2. Support for a U.S. National Conference
    3. Support for a regional seminar on African Minorities in the Americas

Important Dates

1. U.N. Sub Commission on Minorities **(Geneva/July 31 - August 25)**
2. Shout of the Excluded **(U.N. New York/September 12)**
3. Americas Regional Expert Meeting **(Santiago, Chile/October 25-27)**
4. Coordinating Committee Meeting **(St. Paul Minnesota/November 9-11)**
5. Americas Preparatory Conference **(Santiago, Chile/December 4-6)**
6. U.N. Intercessional Meeting **(Geneva, January, 2001)**
7. Americas NGO Consultation **(Quito, Ecuador/February 13-17, 2001)**

Tentative Dates for Canadian Government Regional Consultation

Edmonton - September 5 - 7
Vancouver - September 8 - 9
Winnipeg - September 11 - 12
Halifax - September 22 - 23
Montreal - October 20 - 22
Toronto - October 22 - 23

National Consultation

Ottawa - November (Date to be Confirmed)

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DOCUMENT IV

AFRICAN CANADIAN
COALITION AGAINST RACISM

August 1, 2000

Attn: Mr. Asjborn Eide, Chair
Working Group on Minorities
Sub-Commission on Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
Palais Wilson
1211 Geneva 10
SWITZERLAND

COPY

Re: Proposed Seminar on Minorities in the Americas

Dear Professor Bengoa:

The African Canadian Coalition Against Racism (hereinafter ACCAR) is a national coalition of African Canadian NGOs that was formed to organize the Black community in Canada for the upcoming World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (hereinafter World Conference). ACCAR, as a member of the Coordinating Committee of NGOs in the Americas, joined with other members of the Coordinating Committee in support of the proposal for a regional seminar on African Minorities in the Americas. At a time when other groups in the Americas are enjoying an improved standard of living and increased prosperity, this seminar is both necessary and timely to address the worsening conditions of nearly 200,000,000 Africans in the Americas.

People of African decent in the Americas share a common legacy that currently manifests itself in marginalization, disparate poverty and unemployment within our respective communities and persistent human rights violations. While the forms of violations may vary according to national particularities, their essence and impact upon Africans in the Americas are the same.

The proposed seminar would provide an opportunity for this minority group to come together to help to identify the continued source of these human rights abuses, the unique ways in which these violations manifest themselves in each sub-region of the Americas and assist in the development of solutions to the identified problems. More importantly, this seminar would help to inform and enhance the discussions that will take place at the World Conference.

ACCAR will be more than willing to assist in organizing this seminar. We look forward to your response and to working with you on this very important initiative.

Yours truly,

Margaret Parsons
ACCAR

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330 BAY STREET, SUITE 306, TORONTO, ON, M5H 2S8, TEL: (416) 214-4747, FAX: (416) 214-4748

DOCUMENT V (Page 1 of 2)

Consultation of the NGO Coordination Committee – Americas Region
Puerto Rico, 13-16 July 2000

DRAFT AGENDA

hursday, 13 July 2000

2:00 – 5:00	CLOSED SESSION CC of Americas Region discuss agenda and goals for the meeting
5:00 – 6:00	Welcome, Purpose, Introductions, Logistics
6:30	Depart for Reception
7:00	Reception/Cultural Event

riday, 14 July 2000

8:15	Depart Hotel for University
9:00 – 11:00	Reports from CC Members regarding national/sub-regional work
11:00 – 11:30	BREAK
11:30 – 12:30	National/Sub-regional issues
12:30 – 2: 00	LUNCH
2:00 – 3:30	Preparations for Americas PrepCom
3:30 – 4:00	BREAK
4:00 – 6:00	Americas PrepCom issues
6:30	Depart for Museum
7:00	Visit Exhibition
8:00	Reception/Dinner

1. Info and Action in each Region & in each Sect
2. Info on NGO Forum & Americas PrepCom
3. Short term Strategy (Campaign, parties)
4. Long-term Strategy
- Inclusion of Civil Society
- American Position on theme
- Resources

Saturday, 15 July

8:00	Depart for Colegio de Abodados de Puerto Rico
9:00 – 10:30	World Conference Against Racism How to impact themes, NGO Forum, other issues
10:30 – 11:00	BREAK
11:00 – 12:30	Panel Discussion on Vieques
12:30 – 2:00	LUNCH
2:00 – 3:30	WCAR; Issue Groups/Working Groups for the Americas Region
3:30 – 4:00	BREAK
4:00 – 6:00	Continue
6:30	Reception/Dinner

Sunday, 16 July

9:00 – 10:30	Next Steps
10:30 – 11:00	BREAK
11:00 – 12:30	Next Steps
12:30	LUNCH

Reunión Consultiva del Comité Coordinador de ONGs de las Américas
Conferencia Mundial contra el Racismo de la ONU
San Juan, P.R.
13-16 de julio de 2000

REGION	NOMBRE	ORGANIZACION	PAIS
Canada	Margaret Parsons	African American Legal Clinic	Canada
Estados Unidos	Deborah Robinson	International Possibilities Unlimited	E.U.
Caribe	Palmira Ríos	Instituto Puertorriqueño de Estudios de Raza e Identidad, UPR	Puerto Rico
Caribe	Aida Cruz	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)	Trinidad-Tobago
Méjico	nd		
América Central	Celeo Alvarez	Organización Negra Centro Americana	Honduras
Región Andina	Irene León	Agencia Latinoamericana de Información	Ecuador
Brazil	Ivanir dos Santos	CEAP	Brazil
Brazil	Zayika Carr	Geledés Instituto da la Mulher Negra	Brazil
Cono Sur	Romero Jorge Rodríguez	Mundo Afro	Uruguay
Pueblos Indígenas-Región Norte	Juana Majel-Dixon	National Congress of American Indians	California. E.U.
Pueblos Indígenas-Región Sur	Myrna Cunningham (excusada)	Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaraguense	Nicaragua
Jóvenes	Jalida Bennett	American Friends Service Committee	E.U.

DOCUMENT VI (Page 2 of 2)

OBSERVADORES/ AS			
Observador/a	Juan Figueroa Sara Ríos	Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund	E.U.
Observador/a	René Pinto Lugo Migdalia Adrover	Comisión de Derechos Civiles, P.R.	Puerto Rico
Observador/a	Oquendo Medina Julio César Santana	Cámara de Diputados Consul Rep. Dom., P.R	República Dominicana
Observador/a	Roger Wareham	International Associaton against Torture	New York, EU
Observador/a	Kim Gottschalk	American Indians Rights Fund	Colorado, E.U.
Observador/a	María H. Gratacol	Gender and Race Project	Estados Unidos
Observador/a	Fatoka Eaddy	International Possibilities Unlimited	Estados Unidos

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